Controlling Sexual Harassment Executive Summary

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"Positive School Climate Is Crucial to Anti-Bullying Efforts"

- > Positive School Leadership can significantly impact school climate by:
 - Fostering a Learning Environment in which bullying is not tolerated.
 - Positive school atmosphere reduces bullying and other forms of misconduct, including sexual harassment.
- ➤ Anti-Bullying Efforts must start at the top
 - If principals do not take the lead then policy will go nowhere.
- **Everyone is Responsible**
 - There might difficulties in measuring and quantifying leadership, however, this should not stop all staff, from trying to identify the specific actions or steps successfully taken by a district leader to create a safe school climate that values all students and does not tolerate bullying of any kind.
 - The "Buy-In" from the entire school staff is mandatory for the longevity of any anti-bullying initiative, otherwise, once the leader/principal leaves his/her policy will fall apart.
 - Schools must take steps to combat bullying *long* before any serious incidents happen.
- > "School leaders must acknowledge the existence of bullying and harassment in their schools and fully understand the scope of the problem by collecting data."
 - The message should be: "No one is to blame by everyone is responsible."
- > Anti-bullying efforts should be less reactionary and discipline-based and more proactive throughout the school and community.
 - The first step in any proactive process begins with the way the school principal deals with his/her staff.
- ➤ A positive school climate as established by the principal, teachers, staff, students and parents is a key indicator as to the level of bullying which will be seen in an institution.
- ➤ A study which surveyed 1,000 middle school students found the higher level of school engagement by students provided protection from bullying and produced greater levels of academic achievement.
- ➤ A positive school climate is linked to a positive educational and social experience for students, therefore, schools should follow the positive standards set by the "National School Climate Council". Those five standards are:
 - Develop a share vision and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a positive school climate.
 - Adopting policies that promote social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual learning as well as systems that address barriers to learning.
 - Implementing practices that promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic development of students and student engagement, as well as addressing barriers to learning.

- Creating an environment where all members are welcomed, supported, and feel safe in school socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.
- Utilizing meaningful and engaging practices, activities and norms that promote social and civic responsibilities and a commitment to social justice.

> "Bullying-Proof Your School" Program

- This program is designed as a systemic and comprehensive program with a main focus on school climate change.
- A good leader will tap into the notion that people (school staff), have a desire in their hearts, to prevent bullying from taking place in their schools.



